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Monteau, A. T.
Coxettersville and
Bakersville

COXETTERSVILLE

- AND -

BAKERSVILLE

SETTLED BY CAROLINIANS

CITY GATES
1879-1880

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COMPILED BY
A. T. MONTEAU
St. Augustine, Florida

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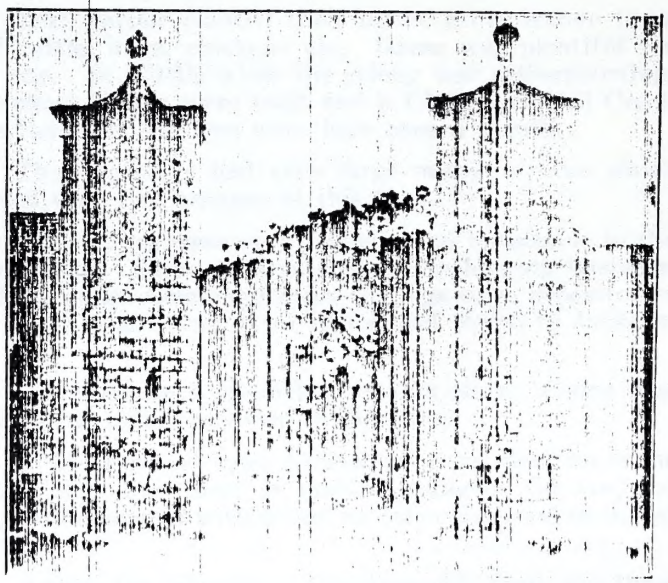


It is not the intention of the writer to comment on early history, but as he observed the City in the years of 1880 and 1881.

Compiled by

A. T. MONTEAU

Partial History of Coxettersville now Bakersville, and how it came to be settled and how St. Augustine looked to the writer in the early 80'.

During the 70', The Carolina Steamship Co. of Charleston, S. C. operated two steamships from Charleston to Savannah, Ga., Jacksonville and all points on the St. John's river up to Palatka.

The steamer "Dictator" was in command of Captain, Leo Vogel, his daughter, Miss Louise is now living here. The family lived here for several years, occupying a house formerly standing on Charlotte St., which has been replaced by the Bennett Hotel.

1687 The St. Augustine Historical Society

The Vogels were French, probably decended from the French Huguenots of France who settled the Carolina's.

The Steamer City Point, was in command of Captain, Coxetter, some of his decendents are living in St. Augustine at present.

These steamers made weekly trips, at that time there was no railroad south of Jacksonville, called by the Indians Cow Ford.

The F. R. N. had a narrow guage road from Fernandina to Jacksonville. In the early 70' Captain Coxetter either received a grant of land from the Government of the U. S. or from the State of Florida, otherwise he would not have been able to colonize the settlement called Coxettersville.

Each settler received 40 acres of land, whether any other bonus was given is not known. A number of Citizens of Charleston S. C. accepted Captain Coxetter's colonization scheme and emigrated to Florida.

They settled on the east bank of Deep Creek a tributary of the St. John's River which was navigable for some miles.

This was the beginning of the settlement of Coxettersville. In a very short space of time the colony thrived seemed to be prosperous and contented with the change, though it must have been very hard for some of them to become reconciled from a pleasure and busy life where they were born and raised to the troubles and deprivations of a frontier life. Still they were a noble band imbued with the spirit of their forefathers who braved difficulties of all kinds. Names of some of the Colonists were: Applers, Dr. Ludwig, Dr. Speisseger, Powers, Hertz, Starowski, Mahrs, Coler, Hawkins, W. R. Lee who was connected with the Lee's of Virginia fame. His wife Amelia Duc Lee who was a descendant of the Duc family of the original Huguenots founders of South Carolina.

These with their families formed quite a community of people, in the near neighborhood were a few natives of Spanish origin as follows, Peter Pacetti, Domingo Pacetti, Ceytano Solano, Phillip Solano, Aleck Solano,: Dennis Solano and their families.

Each settler planted their lands, grew orange trees raised cattle, hogs, chickens etc. Game was plentiful for every one. In a little while the colony was selfsupporting, little school houses were built and a Church at Mill Creek where Religious services were held once a month.

The Pacettie's had very large orange groves which produced very fine oranges at this time.

The natives were very friendly and hospitable to the new colonists. Many settlers engaged in logging business, very large pines were numerous, the logs were deposited in Deep Creek where they were rafted and towed to Jacksonville.

Sawmills were operating at this time. Cedar logs were also cut rafted and sold to the mills.

Cypress logs of large dimensions were plentiful in the Swamps, they were used in making shingles, the roofs of houses were covered with them, no other material in use at that time.

Among the colonists of Coxettersville there was three who had learned the tinning business with the firm of H. A. Duc of Charleston. In all probability they were the first tinners of St. Augustine as they operated a tin shop in the City.

As the settlement and activities of the colonists have been outlined I will now proceed to give some account of points on the St. John's River touched by the steamers mentioned in previous pages. Picolata next point on journey up the St. John's.

At this point Theordore Bridier operated a store also a wharf for transfer of goods and the shipment of oranges and other merchandise. Along the river there was a good many orange groves.

Dr. Fitzhugh, Dr. Fisk, Canova and others had homes along the river. Passengers for St. Augustine were transported from this point. The distance from this point was eighteen miles, the transfer was by bus operated by Irwin Bros.

At Lurcy which was eight miles either way, the horses were changed. Between Picolata and Tocoi there was

an island upon which was growing a large collection of tropical fruit, oranges, grape fruit and the delicious shaddock simular to grapefruit longer in shape, very large, some containing red, yellow and white meats of very fine flavor. Baroness Bernard de Conts of Austria was known as the owner, at the time visited a colored man was looking after the property. Probably the island has been submerged.

PALATKA

From Piciolata we arrive at Palatka, here was a large busy town, being the distribution point further south, had a number of good hotels at that time also the point where people embarked on the little stern wheel steamer for a pisturesque voyage up the crooked Oclawaha river lighted by a pan of lightwood on the bow of the boats.

The blind mosquitoes at that time were so numerous the front of the buildings on the water side looked like they were painted black. Some people said that at times they were so thick they would put a good size fire completely out.

They did not bite only swarmed on you.

From Jacksonville all the way up to Palatka large alligators could be seen resting upon logs lazily floating up and down the river.

Coming back to Picalata we stroll on the road to St. Augustine, there was quite a settlement which looked very prosperous, orange groves, cattle, hogs, planting crops of sugar cane.

In the fall making sugar and syrup for their own use and some to sell.

Among those who lived along the road to St. Augustine were Colee's, Speisseger's, Klipstein's, McConnell's Bartola Weedman, Jake Lee, Bell's, Nestler's, Hudnall's, Taylor's, Ashton's, Weedman. Along this route were some very fine orange groves, Miss America Weedman had a very large grove, the trees were large, very thick in circumference producing large fruit in large numbers.

One tree in the Jake Lee grove is said to have bourne from two thousand to three thousand at a bearing.

These trees were grown from the seed, grafting not practised then.

Parties mentioned with their families constituted a large number of settlers and formed quite a community.

Dances were given for the benefit of the people, suppers were served consisting of different kinds, pileau, sometimes chicken, gopher, pork. After supper dancing was in order until morning, such affairs were enjoyed by all the people.

Road to St. Augustine from Bakersville

During the rainy season from Bakersville was one sheet of water with exception of a high knoll now and then, there was no water famine. Within a half a mile of four mile swamp was a bed of coarse gravel such as was used in the making of mortar by bricklayers.

On the road a stretch of land was called "Glympse of Glory", it is not known who gave it that name or where the inspiration came from. From there the road led to the present King Street, at that time Weedman had a dairy on the corner.

RAILROADS

Next we come to railroads, at that time the first railroad from the St. John's river to St. Augustine was from Tocoi, it was built by Jacob Astor of New York.

The little donkey engine was named Jacob Astor on the cab, the terminus was on a piece of land back of the oil station on King Street. The Agent was the late Mr. Clark, the engineer a Mr. Owens. The road was a narrow gauge one.

The first railroad from Jacksonville to St. Augustine was built by Jerome Green and A. M. Lyons of Rochester, N. Y., it was a narrow gauge and was called Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax Railroad.

The first engine that rolled in St. Augustine was named A. M. Lyons on the cab, the terminus was in front of the old water works building. A. M. Lyon was a brother to

W. Y. Lyons who operated a wholesale grocery at the location of the present Lyons building corner of St. George and King Street.

W. Y. Lyons and W. Sanchez were the principal merchants, they received their goods by schooner having from three to four masts, every two or three months. There was plenty of water on the bar coming and going, Eddie Allen was the pilot.

Strolling to water side there was an opening that led from the river that was walled in by coquina on three sides with steps on the west was wall leading to the street, tide flowed in and out, the fishermen used to land their boats and sell their fish.
At the east end of the park was the so called slave market which was used as meat market at this time.

Among those who sold meat was Bernard Masters, John Andrea, Tom Falany and William Desselberger. The tower on the market contained a bell which was rung at 11 o'clock every day signifying market was over.

Corner Charlotte and Cathedral was the St. Augustine Hotel a four story building operated by Cap. Vail, further up Charlotte Street was the Edward House on the east.

Opposite the Court House, Bossie Munson operated a small store, also was the founder of the Munson Hotel, his brother Fritzie Munson was a dealer in horses, a sister Mrs. Adolphus Pacetti who lived to be ninty years old, also relatives at Mandarin, Florida.

Corner Charlotte and narrow street Dr. John Vedder had a museum which covered part of the land on which the Munson Hotel now stands. On the west side Mrs. Hernandez operated the Hernandez Hotel, she was a daughter of Cap. John Masters, the present Henry being her son, he being the present owner of the Ocean View Hotel.

Further north on Charlotte St., Bartola Genovar operated a grocery, wine room and cigar factory which employed many people. Next to Genovar's, G. T. Bunting had an undertaking business, he said people died so slow he had to open a furniture business, otherwise he would starve. He said the pure artesian water made them live long.

To south of the Court House, Judge Henderson had a law office, he was also the owner of the old house on Marine St., and lived there with his family. In the same building his two sister in laws' had a dry-goods store.

On King Street the Episcopal Church stood, said by historians used to be the first Catholic Church. Where Hamblen Club stands was a Chinese Restaurant, next John Carr's family lived. Dr. Speissigger operated a drug store. On the water side was a Yacht Club, over the river a drug store operated by Mr. Lopez was in the building. On East Bay Street Mr. Relf had a ice house. On the water side Mr. Capo had a bath house which was patronized by the people.

On Cathedral Street the Catholic Church stood. Bishop Moore from Charleston, S. C., was in charge, Priests under him were Fathers Pacha Peterman, Bottolacio Langlade and Merritt, Father Peterman died during the yellow fever epidemic at Jacksonville.

Corner St. George Street, Solomon and Bloomfield operated a novelty store, handling newspapers etc., H. J. Usina and Charles Segui were clerks. Next to Bloomfield, Joseph and Meyerson kept the first gents' furnishing store. J. Tarlinksy was the first Hebrew to open a general store, handling dry goods and other merchandise. He was courteous to his customers, performed many charitable acts to the people which was not publicly known.

Among the property left by Mr. Tarlinsky to his heirs is the mansion that formerly belonged to P. Lorrilard the tobacco magnate of New York, and is used as the home of the widow and children.

Corner St. George and Treasury St., Dr. Peck lived, on the opposite corner the Florida Hotel extended east to Charlotte Street. The open lot on St. George St. was the Magnolia Hotel, operated by Palmer and McDowell it was 'L' shaped running west to Spanish St., then south on Spanish Street. Going north on St. George there were a good many Spanish style houses with balconies hanging over the street.

Further north on St. George St., we find the so-called old school house was occupied by an old colored woman and her Chinese husband. We now arrive at the old City Gates here was the remnants of a draw bridge, which probably

acted as a barrier to keep intruders from crossing from one side to the other. A water moat extended from the west wall of Fort San Marco along Orange St., to the San Sebastian River on the west. Tide flowed up the moat.

San Marco Ave. was sparsely built at this time. On the lot now occupied by the Civic Center, was a large mansion owned by a party named Kingsland a banker who finally tore the building down. The owner of this land was Cap. John Masters who it is claimed captured Osceola the Seminole Chief who was confined in the Fort San Marco.

Strolling north we came to Mrs. Usina's house, she was a daughter of Cap. John Masters. On the east we find Dala Masters, who was a son of Cap. John. On the east further north three houses, belonging to Ben Riley a colored man still stands. On the west side where Rhode Ave. opens was a grove, extending to river bought by Mr. Rhode some years after it was opened for settlement. Further north on the east the land ran back to a branch of the Matanzas River This stretch of land was called Pumpkin Hill and was occupied by some of the natives, Andrea's, Pacetti's, Lopez's, Falany and others. Miss Lucy Abbott owned considerable property running down to the north end of the Fort green.

Further north on the west side we come to a two story house that was occupied by Judge Stickney and wife, Honorable Judge Long lived with them. Next was a one story cottage setting back from the street, belonging to W. Y. Lyons and family.

Next in line Bernard Masters who had large cattle interests, lived with his family. On the opposite side the the Artist Heade and wife lived. North to Ocean St., a two story house still stands. Opposite Ocean St., on the west where Garnett's grove now stands the land extended to the San Sebastian river. Among the trees a cottage stood in the middle of the land, was occupied by the Graper family. This land was open for settlement some years later.

Corner San Marco Ave. and Ocean St., Felix Ranty and family lived. Strolling down Ocean St., we come to the location of a Shrine and burial ground, extending to a creek and marsh to the east, the creek is a tributary of the Matanzas River. The Shrine bears the name of "Nuestra Senora de la Leche" Latin Phrase, English version "Lady of the

Milk and safe delivery". Erected on the spot where Pedro Menendez de Aviles landed in 1565. Here the first Holy Mass was celebrated. Scene of martydom of Father Rodriquiz and Francisan laymen during the Indian uprising of 1597.

It is on this spot that Florida soil became imbedded with the blood of martyr missionaries, who while offering his prayers to Almighty God, was slain by the dreadful tomahawk in the hands of an infuriated Indian. This ground is held sacred by the Catholic Church in rememberance of the first Mass.

Parties have claimed to have premises where Religious Services were first held, they built imitation Chapels, erected statues etc., They have no record to prove their claims, records from natives are more authentic than from Archives five thousand miles away. Records of the past can be construed to suit the occasion, as it is practised at the present time by unscrupulus persons. The Shrine was erected to the glory of God. Imitation Shrines was for the purpose of making money using Catholicity for the scheme.

Myrtle St. was the only outlet from H. H. William's land, corner of Myrtle and San Marco Ave., a two story house now standing, was occupied by O. B. Smith whose wife was a daughter of W. Y. Lyons, a merchant. Mr. Smith published the only newspaper at this time, he was honest, fearless in his work, he never omitted printing the news as they were, and was not bored by the fear of losing a subscriber by printing facts. Down Myrtle St., we come to the William's property which extended north to the present road to Vilano Beach, with the exception of two lots belonging to a Mr. Camparells. Very pretty cottage stood on the grounds.

Mr. William's property ran west to San Marco Ave., Question: What did he do with this large tract of land?. He raised flowers and vegetables of all kinds. He supplied the hotels and others every day, the two wheeled cart drawn by a mule was driven to the city, laden with vegetables. Sonny Morals, a colored man was his driver also his Friday.

My visits to the place was quite often, taking notice of the surrounding a two story house stood in the middle of the grounds. Changes have been made since. In front of the house was a flowing well, probably 2 inch, surrounded

by a square coquina wall on four sides, the water of which was used to water plants and vegetables. In planting Mr. Williams found bones of all kinds, but he told his help to put them back in the ground, covering them up, saying though I am an Atheist, I believe the bones of the dead should not be disturbed.

From Myrtle St. north east side of Avenue was a two story building occupied by A. M. Lyon and family, said Mr. Lyon was one of the builders of the first railroad from Jacksonville. On the west side there was no improvement until this land was bought and opened for settlement by the late Dr. R. B. Garnett a few years later. Further north on the west side Judge Cooper resided with his family, and the Andreu's who were his wife's sister. From there on was a forest until you reached the site of the present waterworks.

On the east side was a two story building occupied by the Matais Cappelea family. All of the lands from there to the east side was a forest until a large creek was reached, at the head of the creek the Hildreth family lived, they were from Massachusetts. From there on was a forest and hunting was engaged in by the natives in the grounds.

Roaming north through the forest, the opening was a dirt road, leading to the farming settlements of the country. On the west side of the road we come to a road leading to a bridge over the San Sebastian river called Jeffrys, so called because he lived in the forest on the west bank of the river. Jeffrys was a colored man, the children used to call him coon liver, to tease him.

Strolling south we come to the Whitney tract of land, at this time there was a spring of pure bubbling water and many a person quenched their thirst from its pure cool water. It stands among the clump of oak trees that are in the middle of the grounds. The spring was always called "Ponce de Leon" Springs. the land is now called Santa Rosa. It is a beautiful spot and should make an ideal settlement.

Before concluding this treatis a few words about the City's government at this time it would not come amiss. The City had an Aldermanic form, Mayor, six aldermen elected by the people. The Mayor received fifty dollars per month.

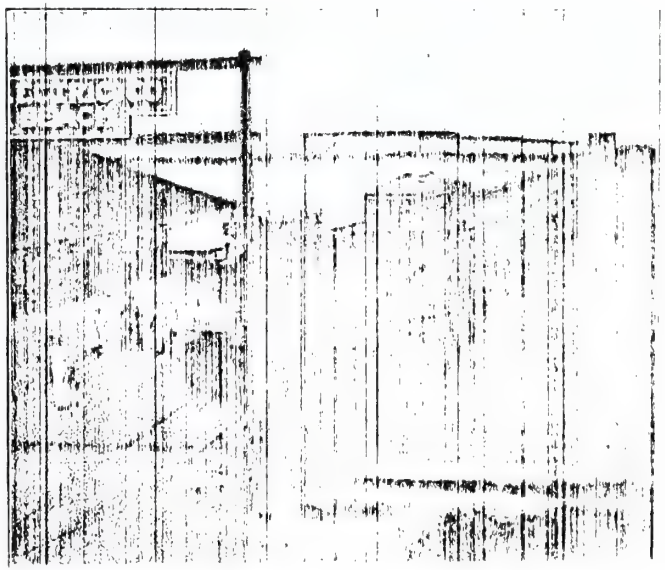
Few notables who served in that capacity were W. W.

Dewhurst, Dr. Webb, John Long, Johnson and others, the City had no debts and owed no money.

COUNTY OFFICIALS

Among the County officials worthy of mention were Hon. Judge Dunham, Judge Forward, Christobal Pomar was County treasurer for years. Andreas Lopez held office for a long period. Bartola Oliveros was clerk of the Court. The Judge of the Circuit Court was Hon. Judge Call, he was a fair and impartial man and was liked by all the people, his only failure, he always whittled a stick while hearing a case.

The City was strictly Republican, Judge Long was head of the party, assisted by E. F. Joyce, Sr.. Colored Republican head was D. M. Papy. Col. House was Postmaster. U. J. White had a franchise to build a road to Palatka and Daytona. He operated a tram road hauling logs and wood. He must have sold his interest, all at once he bought land at Hastings and Elkton, engaging extensively in planting potatoes, therefore he came justly to be called the originator of the potato industries in St. John's County. Mr. Buck was the Postman carrying the mail to Daytona Beach and settlements along the line, Matais Cappalia was the trusted driver.



A short treatis for the Carolinians who settled in St. John's County

SOUTH CAROLINA

In the year 1520 was visited by a Frenchman Lucas Vasquard de Ayllon. Year 1562 Huguenots started a settlement at Fort Royal some distance from Charleston on the Atlantic Ocean.

This place had a natural harbor deep enclosed by land on both sides, with capacity to accommodate a very large fleet of ships. Why it never had been made use of as a seaport is a puzzle to many. Late years the Government had a large supply ship anchored there with a tender, a few miles where at present is the City of Beaufort.

In the year of 1670 a settlement was made on the Ashley River and was called Oyster Neck on account of numerous beds of oysters in the river. In 1680 the settlement was moved from Oyster Neck to present site at the confluence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. King Charles being head of the French Government, it was named in honor of the King, Charles.

North and South Carolina were named in honor of Queen Caroline who was Queen at that time. Oyster Neck was and is where the Government has a drydock at this time.

The Island of Haiti and surrounding Islands were under the French Government. Inserrections were so often that the French residents became tired of having trouble with the negro slaves, a great many left the Island with property they could carry, many had valuable coffee plantations which they were forced to leave.

Among the number who left Santo Domingo and settled in Charleston was F. A. Duc the father of the late H. A. Duc and F. A. Duc respectivly whose descendents are now residing in Charleston at present.

Both sons were named Adam in honor of Adams who was President of the United States of America.

The senior Duc was so kind to his negro slaves it was an unpleasant task to leave them, as it was impossible to

to take all, some of them were able to make the change. After arriving at their destination they were informed that they were no longer slaves, and they could go where they wished. No Monsieur, we stay with you as long as you live. Many heart rendering scenes were enacted at the departure of the French residents from the Islands.

In the year of 1876 French residents who left their coffee plantations on the Island were paid by the French Government for their loss. Of course in the excitement of leaving many left valuable papers where-by they lost.

Charleston has many historic places, monuments, Churches and ancient buildings. The famous Fort Sumter that stands in the middle of the water, Old Fort Moultrie on Mt. Pleasant built of palmetto logs, they being so porous the shells embeded themselves in the logs remained without exploding. On south battery stands a monument to the memory of Sergt. Jasper, while the shot and shells were falling from the English fleet on Fort Moultrie he jumped over the rampart to recover the flag that was knocked down, replaced it with the famous words, "Let us not fight without a flag".

The old Huguonot Church that stands at the corner of Queen and St. Phillips Sts. is a specimen of ancient French architure. St. Micheals Church at the corner of Meeting and Broad Sts. is an old English style of architure. The Belfry contains a chime of bells that were brought from England. During the war with England the chimes were siezed and carried to England. Some years after they were brought and restored to the Church and were placed in the belfry. It was quite a pleasure to the people to hear the old familiar tunes ring out from the Church tower.

On Sundays old time hymns were played, Nearer My God to Thee, Jesus Lover of my soul, and other Church melodies were enjoyed by the people. The music from them was a source of pleasure and caused many to say a prayer and lift their hearts to their God above. On festive days old comic tunes were pealed from the tower, Old Jemima, Sister Sally and other Christmas chimes and ringing the old year out and the new one in. The chimes were played by a colored man who had formarly been a slave. On Hazel St. the Church of St. Mary's stands, built by the French Catho-

lic, it is of Ancient Gothic architecture resembling some of the old Churches to be found in different parts of France. The Church yard was used as a buryng ground by the parishoners of the Church. The interior of the Church was decorated with scenes depicted from the Life of Christ. Ceiling as well as walls on both sides were decorated in a lavish style.

Garnett Grove

Be sure to visit the grove famous show place of the city with the numerous large live oak trees hundreds of years old, drive through the famous palm trees lined on both sides of the road, at the end of the drive you see the packing house where the tropical fruits are displayed, Oranges Grapefruit, Tangerines, etc., Pecans, Jellies and novelties—Send a box of the appetizing fruit home to your friends.

Don't forget a drink of pure orange juice

Mr. and Mrs. Jas. J. Murphey—

Phone 803-J - W

With the grove a Riding Academy is connected and you can enjoy riding horse back and if you want to you can be given riding lessons at reasonable rates, gentle horses, competent instructress.

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American and Chinese Style Meals

When in need of a meal, visit this famous restaurant where your wants will be satisfied by courteous waitresses, served promptly, Foods that are cooked by competent Chefs in grand style.

You will be pleased and your inner man fully satisfied, Beer served with meals if desired. Don't forget this clean, neat looking restaurant when in need of a meal.

Perfect sanitation at highest standard.

Thanks for past favors, wishing a continuance.

Yours truly,

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Thanks for patronage.

Yours truly,

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